

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Michigan Central Railroad Jackson Depot

other names/site number Jackson Amtrak Station

=====

2. Location

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street & number 501 East Michigan Avenue not for publication N/A  
city or town Jackson vicinity N/A  
state Michigan code MI county Jackson code 075  
zip code 49201

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally X statewide      locally. (      See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Michigan SHPO  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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Verbal Boundary Description

1. Depot Property

All that parcel of land situated in the City of Jackson, County of Jackson, and State of Michigan, being designated as Parcel MIJJ-1 on Railroad Valuation Map No. V I-B-M/S-33-C, and V I-B-M/S-33 -D, as drawn on June 30, 1918 and furnished to the United States Railway Association on December 1, 1975; and being all of the land of The Michigan Central Railroad Company, as shown on the Map, which lies within the following described lines:

Beginning at a point on the southern line of Elizabeth Street opposite Station 3983+50; thence, southwesterly 85 feet, more or less, to a point distant 20 feet northwardly and at right angles to the northeasternmost rail of the main line tracks, as it was located on December 1, 1975; thence, northwestwardly 402 feet, more or less, parallel to said northeasternmost rail to a point opposite Station 3987+52; thence, northeastwardly 44 feet, more or less, to the southerly line of East Michigan Avenue; thence, eastwardly along line of East Michigan Avenue 212 feet, more or less, to the line of Elizabeth Street [Park Avenue?]; thence, southwardly by said line of Elizabeth Street [Park Avenue?] 123 feet, more or less; thence, southeastwardly by the same, 130 feet, more or less; thence, eastwardly by the same 37 feet, more or less, to the point of beginning.

The above described parcel or parcels are identified in the records of the United States Railway Association as Line Code 5304-75.3.

2. Express Building Parcel

That part of Block 43, Block 50 and Block 49 in "Ford's Extension to the Village of Jackson" in the Southwest Quarter (SW 1/4) of Section 35, Township 2 South, Range 1 West, City of Jackson, Michigan;

Beginning at an iron found on the south line of Elizabeth Street opposite Railroad Station 3983+50; thence South 37 degrees 12 minutes 22 seconds West 76.54 feet (record 85 feet) to a point that lies 20 feet northerly of the centerline of the northernmost track of the main line tracks; thence South 52 degrees 47 minutes 37 seconds East, parallel with and 20.0 feet distant therefrom said northernmost track, 143.72 feet; thence North 37 degrees 12 minutes 22 seconds East, 15.00 feet; thence South 52 degrees 47 minutes 37 seconds East, parallel with and 35.0 feet distant therefrom said northeasternmost track, 149.51 feet to the west line of Van Dorn Street; thence North 02 degrees 29 minutes 41 seconds East, along said west line, 217.57 feet to said south line of Elizabeth Street; thence North 87 degrees 30 minutes 19 seconds West, along said south line, 206.00 feet to the point of beginning, being Block No. 43 in said Plat.

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Also beginning at an iron found at the northeast corner of Lot No. 5, Block 49 in said Plat; thence South 16 degrees 23 minutes 25 seconds West, along the east line of said Lot No. 5, a distance of 193.21 feet to a point that lies 35.0 feet northerly of the centerline of the northeasternmost track of the main line tracks; thence North 52 degrees 47 minutes 37 seconds West, parallel with and 35.0 feet distant therefrom said centerline of the northeasternmost track, 558.75 feet to the south line of Plymouth Street (formerly Railroad Street); thence South 73 degrees 01 minutes 21 seconds East, along said south line, 522.31 feet to the point of beginning; being Lots No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4 and No. 5, Block 49, Lots No. 4, No. 5, and No. 8, Block 50 and a portion of abandoned Perrine Street in said Plat.

Boundary Justification

Comprises the entire depot and express building property currently owned by the National Railroad Passenger Corporation.

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Photographs

Photographer: Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group, Jackson, MI

Date: June 2001

Negatives: SHPO

Photo 2: NW and SW facades

Photo 3: NW and SW facades

Photo 5: NE and NW facades

Photo 8: SW façade, Express Building beyond depot

Photo 9: SE and NE facades

Photo 14: SW and SE facades, depot (L) and Express Building (R)

Photo 15: Waiting Room looking NW

Photo 18: Waiting Room looking SE

Photo 22: Express Building, NE and NW facades

Photo 23: Express Building, SE and NE facades

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**Description**

Jackson's Michigan Central Depot is comprised of two buildings – the depot proper and nearby Express Building – standing on about two acres of land at the east edge of Jackson's central business district. Built in 1872-73 the depot is an Italianate structure slightly over 300 feet in length constructed with walls of red brick trimmed in sandstone. The building is one story in height, except for a two-story block at either end, and fronted along most of its track side by an iron-column canopy. The Express Building, dating from the 1899-1907 period, is a hip-roof, L-shaped, one-story building with brick walls. The depot property includes a brick drive that fronts the depot on the northeast, a triangular park between the drive and East Michigan Avenue, and a yard area associated with the express-building.

The depot is located just east of the intersection of the former Michigan Central Railroad line with East Michigan Avenue. The line, now owned by the Consolidated Rail Corporation, was and remains the main railroad line between Detroit and Chicago, serving Amtrak passenger as well as freight service. The depot stands on the northeast side of the tracks, its street front facing northeast toward East Michigan Avenue, part of Jackson's main east-west street. The area, located at the east edge of Jackson's central business district, today retains only a scattering of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century commercial buildings, the result of highway "improvements" and decades of private disinvestment in the area.

**Depot**

The red brick-wall, Italianate depot is a long, rectangular, single-story building with two-story sections at each end (a small one-story baggage room at the southeast end was a later addition). The main building is on a northwest (towards Chicago) to southeast (towards Detroit) axis and measures approximately 325 feet in length and forty-four feet in width. Two-story sections at each end of the building measure approximately twenty-three feet long by forty-five wide. The original foundation is visible around most of the building and consists of a whitish, pitch-faced, sandstone sillcourse resting on lower courses of light brownish sandstone.

The depot's walls are built of red brick laid in stretcher bond from sillcourse to roof. A few courses below the roof, two courses are corbelled out. The long north and south one-story walls are divided into sixteen equal masonry sections separated by projecting brick piers three stretchers wide. Each section contains a single window or doorway. The tall, narrow windows are each capped with a projecting, five-piece, segmental-arch-head, whitish sandstone lintel with pitched face. The masonry sills each consist of a single, projecting block of pitch-faced white sandstone. The windows consist of double-hung, six-over-six sashes surmounted by three-light transoms. Four doorways are spaced along the one-story walls. Each was originally capped by an eight-light sash and four-light transom, but many of the doorways have been closed off with windows and wooden panels and some of the windows over the doors have been covered with wooden panels.

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The walls of the narrow facades of the two-story "towers" at the building's ends each contains a double doorway at the ground level and a coupled window on the second story. The flanking sections contain single windows on each floor. Traces of red paint remain on the brick on all walls along with traces of a white sand cement treatment that was applied over the mortar between the bricks.

The gable roof on the building's main section slopes to either side from a long lengthwise ridge. The roofs on the two-story sections are hipped. The one-story eaves not involved with the passenger canopy roof and the two-story eaves display sheet metal cornices with prominent modillions. All roofs are clad in modern three-in-one asphalt shingles. Eight red brick chimneys with sandstone caps and belt detailing remain on the building, three on the southeast two-story roof, two on the southeast half of the main roof, and three on the northwest two-story roof.

A wooden passenger canopy twenty-two and one-half feet wide extends nearly the full length of the building along the southwest (track) side. The canopy is supported by two sets of paired cast-iron columns at each end and by fifteen single cast-iron columns equally spaced along the remaining length of the canopy. The columns are mounted on low concrete pedestals. A matching porch twenty-one by ten and one-half feet is attached to the west end of the building and is supported by two sets of paired cast-iron columns standing on coursed sandstone footings.

The passenger platforms are modern structures of concrete with some remaining c. 1930 tile under the canopy. Photographs from the 1900 era show the original covered platform to have been of wood. From Michigan Avenue, located just to the depot's northwest, the concrete platform between the building and Track 1 (closest to it) extends for about 800 feet to the southeast. A second shorter and narrower platform lies between tracks 1 and 2. Portions survive of the curbing for an older brick platform between tracks 2 and 3.

The principal interior spaces in the depot were the women's and general waiting rooms and a restaurant. The ladies' waiting room, located in the building's mid-section, today serves as the waiting room. A rectangular space with an exterior double doorway in the center of each long side, the room retains its plastered walls and ceiling and dark stained wood Victorian trim, including a high vertical tongue-and-groove board dado. The original dark wood ticket office front remains in place and in use. It is located in the west corner of the room. Short pilasters with raised-edge panels between support a waist-height shelf and pilasters frame the segmental-arch-head ticket window openings and support a simplified classical cornice. A plastered wall rises above the three-sided office up to the ceiling. The present restored condition of this room is a result of work carried out in 1978 that included the removal of later partitions and the refinishing of the woodwork, previously painted over.

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The former general waiting room occupied the space to the northwest of the current waiting room. The semi-octagonal ticket office and a rectangular newsstand – the latter finished with woodwork identical to the ticket office's – with an arched wooden screen between them separated the two waiting rooms. The newsstand was long ago removed and the opening between it and the ticket office enclosed.

A large restaurant occupied most of the building's southeast end. The archway in the center of today's waiting room's southeast wall and another directly in line with it that together framed either end of a small hall between the waiting room and restaurant area remain in place, but the southeast archway is now enclosed and forms the back of a shallow recess. The arched upper portion of the enclosed southeast archway contains a modern mural of a locomotive and banner reading "Welcome to Jackson." The former general waiting room and restaurant areas have both been closed to the public for decades, but reportedly retain much of their basic historic finish. Like most of the building, these areas appear to be little used today.

### **Express Building**

The depot complex includes a second building, the Express Building, located about seventy-two feet southeast of the main depot building alongside the railroad tracks. The Express Building is a one-story, L-shaped building with a hip roof and red brick walls. The long outer sides of the L are on the southwest and northwest. The building's foundation is finished in smooth-faced coursed light brownish sandstone. The brick walls above the foundation are laid in uniform courses of stretchers from the foundation to the roof. A few courses below the roof four courses are corbelled out. The asphalt shingle roof is pierced by two plain chimneys, one at each end of the roof ridge.

The walls are divided into equal masonry sections separated by projecting brick piers two and one-half stretchers in width. The southwest wall (facing the tracks) is 98'3" in length and divided into six sections of equal length. Three sections contain freight doors for cart and wagon access to the depot platform, two each a single window, and one (on the southeast) a window and single door. The northwest façade (facing the depot) is 81'10" in length and is divided into five sections, the three center sections each having a large sliding freight door, the northeast section two windows, and the southwest two small windows. A modern loading dock with an open metal grating deck is centered on this façade. Above the deck can be seen markings where a roof canopy was once attached. The 33'9" northwest end of the northeast façade (facing Elizabeth Street) is divided into two sections, one with a single window and one with a door and window. Inside the L, the 48'5" southeast façade consists of three sections, each containing two windows. The northwest facade inside the L is 64'5" in length and is comprised of four sections, two with two windows each, one containing a large freight door, and one with a single door and window. The southeast-facing façade is 33'8" in length and consists of two sections, each with a single window. The prominent masonry

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window and door lintels and window sills are each made of a single massive, smooth-faced, sandstone slab. The masonry lintels are set flush to the wall and the sills project about two inches. What appear to be the remaining original windows are of double-hung, two-over-two form. Some windows are now boarded up and a few have replacement single-light sashes. Single doors usually have two-light transoms over them.

**Non-Building Contributing Features of the Property**

**Park**

The triangular park in front of the depot that is bounded on the northeast by East Michigan Avenue, on the east by South Park Avenue, and on the southwest by the drive in front (north) of the depot is the last remnant of a public space once known as La Grand Square that dates from 1836. A c. 1912 photograph of the park shows a pipe rail fence, with concrete posts, surrounding the park and what appears to be a rockwork feature – possibly a fountain, although there appears to be no basin or pool around its base – in the center. The rockwork feature is gone, and a small, square-plan flower bed with pipe rail fence around it today occupies the center of the park. The remnants of the pipe rail fence surrounding the park were replaced in the late 1980s or early 1990s with a new fence of similar design. The concrete posts are similar but not identical to the originals. They replicate concrete posts from a similar fence at the former Michigan Central (now Amtrak) station in Niles. Replacement posts for the Niles fence were cast using the old posts as models. The Niles molds were later used to cast the new Jackson posts. Four of the original Jackson posts now do service to mark the corners of the park's central flower bed (Karhoff, 2002). The park with its lawn and trees provides an attractive greenspace along this stretch of East Michigan Avenue.

**Brick Drive**

Views of the depot dating from the early years of the twentieth century appear to show the brick drive fronting the depot on the northeast side in approximately the same form as it exists today.



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### Significance

The Jackson depot was built by the Michigan Central Railroad in 1872-73 to serve the railroad's main Detroit-Chicago line and four branch lines controlled by the railroad whose convergence at Jackson made the city a railroad center in Michigan second to none. The depot is the oldest railroad station in Michigan still in regular use for its original purpose. It is the most architecturally distinguished Italianate railroad station and one of the two most important nineteenth-century depot buildings in Michigan.

What became the Michigan Central began life as one of three railroad lines across the Lower Peninsula projected by the newly established state of Michigan in the boom times of the later 1830s. In March 1837 the Michigan legislature adopted an internal improvements program for the state that included construction of a "central" railroad across the state from Detroit to the mouth of the St. Joseph River (a "southern" railroad to connect Monroe and New Buffalo and a "northern" one to connect St. Clair with the Grand River in Kent County were also projected). While the economic depression of the late 1830s struck the east only a month after Michigan adopted its internal improvements program, the depression had little effect on "western" states such as Michigan until 1839. Work on the central railroad, financed with some of the proceeds from bond sales to New York and Philadelphia banks made before the economic collapse, began in 1837 and the road was completed from Detroit as far as Ypsilanti in 1838, to Ann Arbor in 1839, Jackson in 1841, Marshall in 1844, and Kalamazoo in early 1846.

The rapidly growing public debt for the program of internal improvements resulted in growing demands from the public by the mid-1840s to sell the central and other railroads and withdraw from the transportation business. The central railroad was sold for \$2,000,000 under an authorizing act adopted March 28, 1846, that also incorporated a Michigan Central Railroad. The railroad's investors, primarily from the Boston area, planned to build a through route to Chicago and extended the line southwestward through Niles to New Buffalo, on Lake Michigan near the Indiana border. New Buffalo was reached in April 1849. Through railroad service to Chicago on the Michigan Central was inaugurated on May 21, 1852 (the above history summarized from Dunbar, pp. 37-51, 59-71).

By the early 1870s Jackson had become one of Michigan's most important railroad centers, served by six lines. Most prominent among them was the Michigan Central Railroad's main line between Detroit and Chicago, then the most important and still a key line in Michigan. Business on this line necessitated the construction of a second track and replacement of the iron tracks with steel ones over the entire Detroit-Chicago route in the early 1870s (*Daily Citizen*, Aug. 26, 1871; Feb. 7, 1872).

The city's second oldest line was the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railroad's Jackson Branch.

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Completed in 1858, it provided a connection east-southeast to Toledo (Dunbar, p. 141). Four additional lines leading out of Jackson to the northwest, southwest, northeast, and south – “all mainly financed, built, and officered by Jacksonians” (Santer, p. 116) – were projected and built shortly after the Civil War. They were:

- Grand River Valley Railroad, Jackson northwest to Grand Rapids through Charlotte and Hastings. This was purchased by the Michigan Central and completed in the early 1870s (*Daily Citizen*, Jan. 17, 1871; Dunbar, p. 143).
- Michigan Air Line Railroad, southwest to Niles through Union City, Three Rivers, and Cassopolis, built in 1870 and leased to the Michigan Central in 1871 (*Daily Citizen*, Jan. 17, 1871; Dunbar, p. 143).
- Fort Wayne, Jackson & Saginaw, south to Fort Wayne, Indiana, completed in 1870 (*Daily Citizen*, Jan. 17, 1871; May 6, 1871).
- Jackson, Lansing & Saginaw, northward to Lansing, Saginaw, and Bay City (later extended to Gaylord and the Straits of Mackinac). This line was leased by the Michigan Central as of September 1, 1871, for ninety-nine years and became the railroad's Jackson, Lansing & Saginaw Division (*Daily Citizen*, Aug. 31, 1871; Dunbar, p. 143).

Early in 1871 the Michigan Central announced the moving of its car and locomotive manufacturing and repair shops to Jackson from Marshall, about thirty miles to the west, where they had been located since the late 1840s when the line was first completed across the state. The city's central location in relation to both the main line and other lines owned or leased by the Michigan Central, the gift by the city of park land for part of the site, and other financial inducements including the forgiving of \$50,000 in indebtedness owed by the Michigan Central's Grand River Valley Railroad paved the way for the relocation (*Jackson Daily Citizen*, Jan. 26, 1871). Construction of the first component of the complex, a roundhouse, began in July 1871, and work on the first part of the machine shop began soon after (*Daily Citizen*, July 7, 1871; Sept. 25, 1871). In addition to these structures, the entire complex was to include repair shops, boiler and blacksmith shops, stationary engine house, office, and water tanks, plus, a short distance away, a “lodging house” providing sleeping accommodations for forty to serve workmen between trains (*Daily Citizen*, May 4, 1872).

Construction of a new depot for Jackson resulted from the enormous growth in railroad business at Jackson owing to the then recent development of the lines that converged on the city. Passenger train schedules for the lines that converged on Jackson in the June 1870 *Travelers' Official Railway Guide* indicate that the Michigan Central was then running four trains daily in each direction; the Jackson, Lansing & Saginaw three trains each way, two as far as Wenona (now part of Bay City) and the other as far as North Lansing; the Grand River Valley Railroad three trains each way to Grand Rapids; and the Fort Wayne, Jackson & Saginaw three trains each way, one to Reading, one to Jonesville, and one to Angola, Indiana; and the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern's Jackson Branch two trains each way to and from Toledo (Vernon, time-table

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nos. 178, 185, 187, 190, 202). Jackson was then the number one station on the Michigan Central for passenger traffic with 72,482 compared to Detroit's 71,927 carried in the previous year (Santer, p. 120, quoting *Jackson Weekly Citizen*, July 19, 1870).

An article in the June 18, 1872, *Jackson Daily Citizen* provided the first announcement of the new depot:

The plans for our new union depot have been prepared by Mr. Newman, the resident engineer of the Central road, and approved by the proper authorities. The building is to be of brick, with slate roof, etc., will be 240 feet long and 40 wide, and only one story in height. It will contain baggage rooms, telegraph office, ladies' and gentlemen's waiting-rooms, ticket-office, dining-room and kitchen, etc., all of the most roomy kind, and well arranged and furnished.

The 1872-73 *Jackson City Directory* lists Robert Morris Newman as the railroad's resident engineer (p. 125).

The July 8, 1872, *Daily Citizen* reported that the "old freight depot building" that occupied the site where the new depot was to be built "is being rapidly demolished." Construction of the new depot probably began in early August. The building would replace the existing one that an article in the August 7, 1872, *Daily Citizen* called "old and comfortless." The 1853 Henry Hart and 1858 Geil & Jones maps of Jackson locate the older depot a block and a half to the northwest on the west side of Columbus Street. In both maps the freight depot stood on the site of the new depot in the center of what was called "La Grand Square" in the 1853 map. This public square was part of "An Extension of the Village of Jacksonburgh on the east side of the Grand River" platted by Jerry Ford and William Ford, Jr., in February 1836. The triangular park in front of the present depot is a last remnant of the pioneer-era square.

The new depot was to be a union station designed to serve the Michigan Central and all of the other railroads except the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern, then a major competitor with the Michigan Central and under the control of William H. Vanderbilt (Vanderbilt also gained control of the Michigan Central in 1876, ending the sometimes ruinous competition (Dunbar, p. 144)). Before the new depot was built, five separate depots -- each several blocks from any of the others -- "served" the city. Only the Grand River Valley and Jackson, Lansing & Saginaw jointly occupied a single building (Santer, p. 119).

The August 7 article provided a more detailed description of the building, obtained "Through the kindness of Mr. Newman, the gentlemanly right-hand man of Mr. H. P. Gardner, Master Builder of the company...."

The length of the building will be 294 feet.... It will be one-story in height, with the exception of about 24 feet at each end, where there will be two stories. The width will be 40 feet, and height about 22 feet -- the two story ends will be about 36 feet high. There will be a verandah, supported by iron pillars, along

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the whole southern side, 25 feet in width, and projecting far enough over the coaches, as they stand upon the track, to protect those entering or leaving them from the rain or sun. There will also be a verandah on the north or Main street front extending about 150 feet – sixteen feet in width. The foundation will be of Joliet cut stone, the walls of brick with cut stone facings, and the roof of slate.

The whole inside of the building will be finished with ash and black walnut and is to be divided into compartments as follows: At the west end, the first room is for baggage, and is 18 X 40 feet. Within the next 28 feet of length are a telegraph office, 17 X 28 feet, two private closets, a water-closet and a stairway. Next is the general waiting room, 40 X 70, and next to that the ladies' waiting room, 40 X 60 feet, with the ticket office, 14 X 15 feet, between them. The ticket office will be of black walnut and glass entirely. The next 10 feet in length are occupied by a ladies' water-closet and another closet, with a 10 feet passage between them. The dining and lunch room, 40 X 50 feet, comes next, and east of that are a kitchen, 24 X 30 feet, carving and dish-room, 12 ½ X 15 feet, and pantry, 13 X 15 feet. Finally, at the east end of the building is another baggage room, 18 X 40 feet.

The "H. P. Gardner" listed above appears to have been Henry A. Gardner, listed in the 1872 Jackson directory as the Michigan Central's chief engineer (p. 72). Gardner, whose home from 1855 until his death in 1875 was in Dwight Township, Livingston County, Illinois, was a Massachusetts native born about 1816. "Mr. Gardner was employed as rodman on the Great Western Railroad in 1836, under [civil engineer R. P.] Morgan, and soon advanced to Junior Assistant." He worked as a civil engineer on the Hudson River, Harlem, and Mohawk & Hudson railroads before coming west to Illinois in 1845. In Illinois he "accepted a position on the Illinois & Michigan Canal, and in 1853 was employed ... in constructing the Chicago, Alton & St. Louis Railroad from Joliet to Bloomington. ... At the time of his death, July 26, 1875, he was Chief Engineer of the Michigan Central Railroad" (Le Baron, p. 481). Gardner was one of twenty-two "charter members" of the American Society of Civil Engineers as of December 1, 1852 (Wisely, p. 18).

Who designed the Jackson depot? The June 18, 1872, article directly states that Newman made the plans, but provides few details, including an inaccurate figure for the overall length. The August 7 article doesn't identify the designer, but the reference to Newman as Gardner's right-hand man suggests that Gardner rather than Newman was in charge of the project, that Newman assisted him, perhaps in the capacity of day-to-day project manager. There is every reason to think that Gardner would have been directly involved in this, one of the railroad's largest depot projects, just as he would have been involved in the design of the railroad's shops complex in Jackson. Unless the intent was to identify Gardner as being in charge of planning the building, there would seem to have been no reason to mention his name. Did the mention of Gardner's name in the article result from efforts by Newman, in providing more detailed information about the new building, to try to correct the attribution of the building's design to himself made in the June 18, 1872, article? In any event, it seems likely, if not absolutely certain, that Henry A. Gardner designed the depot.

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Brief newspaper notices reported the progress of the building's construction:

From the September 30, 1872, *Daily Citizen*: "The brick work on the Michigan Central Passenger house has begun in good earnest. The scaffolding is up, and the door frames are being set."

*Daily Citizen*, October 16: "The Central Railroad passenger house is making fine progress, the walls being now about one-third the way up."

The progress of construction was interrupted on Saturday, November 15, 1872, when a beam on which eight workers stood while raising one of the rafters into place collapsed when a 4 X 4 scantling support beneath the beam's midpoint failed: "This support had been found sufficient during some days work and none of the usual precautions against accident were omitted. But about three o'clock on Saturday afternoon, while the men were engaged in lifting into position one of the north side 'principals,' while every man was straining for a last lift at the command of the foreman, the central support gave way, the beam at the same time yielding to the pressure, and eight of the men were precipitated to the uncovered joists of the first floor, some twenty feet below, where they were mingled in the general *debris* of the falling scaffold." All eight were seriously injured and one, the foreman, B. F. Davis, died a short time later (*Daily Citizen*, Nov. 17, 1872).

December 7, 1872, *Daily Citizen*: "The walls are up and all the roof timbers on, and a large force of carpenters are at work preparing the roof for the reception of the slate, which is on the ground. The work of putting on the cornice will commence with the week, and as soon as this is done the work of slating will commence."

May 15, 1873, *Daily Citizen*: "The head carpenter engaged on the woodwork of the new Michigan Central Railroad passenger depot informs us that now the masons are out of his way, the other workmen can go rapidly onward with the interior. The entire inside of the building is neatly kalsomined and the painting and tuck-pointing of the exterior is about finished. They are now engaged in raising the pillars for the platform on the south side...."

August 12, 1873, *Jackson Weekly Citizen*: "The carpenters are nearly through their labors on the interior ... and the painters and varnishers are at work. The glass has been set in the doors and office fronts, and the fitting of the spacious refreshment room has been completed, furnishing about 150 running feet of counter room for the accommodation of hungry travelers."

With completion of the building an estimated one week away, the *Daily Citizen* in its August 25, 1873, edition devoted more than a column on its front page to the depot. After doting on the quality of the interior finish - the carpentry work in ash and walnut having been done by "a force of about thirty hands" under the

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direction of David Blakely of Kalamazoo and the graining and painting work by a force of eight men under the direction of Matthew Fallahee of Jackson – the article continues with an interior description that provides details not otherwise available to us today:

As for the interior, the central or one-story portion of the building is devoted to a general reception room, 38 X 72, and a ladies' reception room, 38 X 58. Near the west end is the telegraph office, 20 X 28, with the completest arrangements. Near the middle of the building, on the south side, is the ticket office, 18 X 14, and immediately opposite, the news room, 7 X 14. Besides these rooms, there will be rooms ample for baggage purposes, and offices for the leading railroad officials. The two reception rooms are connected by a sliding door way, surmounted by a splendid arch of black walnut; and the trimmings generally of the building are also of black walnut. The wainscoting is of ash, oiled; the doors are grained in imitation of ash. The eastern quarter of the building, including the basement and second floor, will be occupied by a restaurant, under the charge of Mr. W. H. Witt, of the railroad eating houses at Niles and Marshall. The dining room is 40 X 50. In the basement is the cooking range. All the arrangements of this department are faultless. The dining room has over one hundred feet of broad counter, with a large center table, and the south east corner is occupied by an office, in which the safe is already deposited. The kitchen, pantry and scullery adjoining are well stocked with dishes and utensils, and on the north side, fronting the street, is a pleasant private dining room, where tables will be set for the accommodation of parties with ladies, etc. Above these, in the east end elevation are five commodious rooms for the use of Mr. Witt's employes. The upper portion of the west end elevation, over the telegraph office and west baggage room, are several pleasant and convenient offices for the several officers of the road here. The office of Mr. S. H. Babcock, however, is below stairs, at the southeast corner of the ladies' waiting room. The building throughout is well supplied with closets and minor rooms.

The depot is to be heated by steam from a large engine boiler and apparatus in the east end basement, from the establishment of Crane Bros., of Chicago; every room will contain coils of steam pipes, and there are seven sets of coils with ornamental screens and marble tops – three in the principal waiting room, two in the ladies' waiting room and two in the dining hall. Every room and closet will have also a copious supply of water, the source of which is the spring on the company's grounds west of Blackstone street. The marble wash-bowls and drinking founts number about twenty, the plumbing for which, with two sets of spacious water-closets, was done by John Murray, of this city, and it is evidently well done, as is every other work about the building. On our last visit the plate glass sashes and flexible blinds were being put into the office and news room. The glass used is of the heaviest plate, and the lettering designating each department is ground into the glass in the most elegant and durable manner.

The *Daily Citizen* reported the long-anticipated opening of the depot on September 1, 1873, with a single sentence: "The new passenger house was taken possession of to-day." Five days later, however, the paper reported on a visit to the new building. "Both waiting rooms and the long line of platforms are crowded

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with people.... The dining hall which presents a most attractive appearance, has its counters filled with a long line of refreshment takers, while the baggage rooms look as full and as busy as though they had enjoyed their present capacity and accommodations for years. In fact, to look around the new depot with its crowd of travelers it seems impossible that the business could have been so long carried on in the little wooden shed now being made ready to move away." In the coming weeks the paper reprinted favorable reports on the new building from other newspapers, most notably one from the *Chicago Tribune* that began: "The Michigan Central Railroad has just completed at Jackson, Mich., one of the finest passenger stations at any inland town in the West" (Sept. 2, 1873).

The short one-story section at the depot's southeast end was added in 1901 to provide a baggage room to replace one formerly located in the first story of the two-story section to the northwest that was made into office space. Remarkably, the addition was designed to duplicate the architectural character of the 1872-73 building.

Another important historic feature of the depot complex that was constructed after the depot itself is the Express Building that stands across the parking area to the depot's southeast. Express service, which offered a greater degree of security for the railway shipment of valuable parcels, became a standard feature of railroad service in the later nineteenth century. The present brick building replaced an earlier one occupied by the American Express Company standing on about the same site that does not appear in the 1886 Sanborn fire insurance map but is shown in the 1893 and 1899 Sanborn maps. The L-shaped building, its northwest arm occupied by American Express and the southeast by the Union News Company, first appears in the 1907 Sanborn map.

Advertisements by the Michigan Central and Grand River Valley Railroads in the 1872-73 Jackson directory claimed that the Michigan Central ran "4 Express Trains Daily between Detroit and Chicago, Sundays Excepted," and "1 Night Train Each Way Sundays" and that the Grand River Valley ran "Three Passenger Trains Daily Between Jackson and Grand Rapids" (Brown, pp. 116, 132). How many trains were running daily on the Fort Wayne, Jackson & Saginaw and the Jackson, Lansing & Saginaw lines was not reported.

Dunbar in *All Aboard! A History of Railroads in Michigan* calls the half-century between the Civil War and World War I "The Golden Age of Rail Travel." As late as 1926 the Jackson depot was serving seven westbound and six eastbound passenger trains per day on the New York-Chicago run plus eight passenger trains per day each between Jackson and Lansing and Jackson and Grand Rapids (schedule copy in depot working file). By then, however, competition from the automobile and the ongoing highway improvement program, as well as the gradual migration of much of the rural population to the growing cities, was already resulting in substantial reductions in both passenger and freight service on the railroads. By 1926 service on the Air Line route had already ceased. In 1916 the Michigan Central had absorbed the Jackson, Lansing & Saginaw and the Air Line, which until then had been run as independent companies even though long

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controlled by the Central, and in 1930 the New York Central System leased the Michigan Central (Dunbar, p. 266). Service to Bay City and Grand Rapids from Jackson ended in 1959. Passenger numbers on the main Detroit-Chicago line remained high until the last sections of I-94 were completed between the two cities in 1964, and then dropped dramatically (Dunbar, pp. 290-91). Amtrak took over the Detroit-Chicago passenger service in 1971 and continues to operate several passenger trains each way per day.

Amtrak and the State of Michigan financed a refurbishment of the Jackson depot in 1978. The work included a new roof, sandblasting and sealcoating of the exterior brickwork, demolition of a small, structurally unsound addition to the depot at its southeast end and of a non-original canopy between the Express Building and depot proper, and removal of an accretion of office partitions that occupied part of the space in today's waiting room. At the same time an Amtrak engineer from headquarters in Washington proposed installing a drop ceiling in the waiting room and painting the room in the railroad's then current color scheme of red, white, and blue – the walls and ceiling to be white, wood trim blue, and doors red (at the time the walls and woodwork displayed various shades of green). Genevieve Harvey, a member of the Jackson County Historical Society, protested the plan and spearheaded a fund-raising drive that raised \$10,000 to strip and refinish the woodwork (Karhoff, 2002, and *Jackson Citizen-Patriot*, July 26, 1992). The same Amtrak engineer also proposed the paving over of the then neglected park north of the depot, which Brian D. Karhoff, lead station agent since 1978, characterized as generally displaying waist-high weeds at the time. Again, Genevieve Harvey strenuously objected to this proposal. The Amtrak engineer's response was, in effect, "Then you maintain it." Karhoff remembered that John Guidinger helped maintain the park before he took over the task in the late 1970s. The park remains an oasis of green in an otherwise fairly barren streetscape.

The depot currently closes for the day before the last passenger trains have arrived, leaving arriving and departing passengers to stand out in the cold. While the depot's waiting room is well maintained, much of the rest of the building appears unused today. Long-range planning for the future of one of Jackson's key historic landmark buildings is badly needed.

The Union Depot in Jackson is one of the two most important nineteenth-century railroad passenger stations in Michigan, based on overall size, quality or uniqueness of architectural character, and importance of the community served. The only other surviving nineteenth-century Michigan depot that possesses a similar level of historic and architectural significance is the 1881-82 Flint & Pere Marquette Railroad East Saginaw (Potter Street) depot in Saginaw. Built nearly a decade later, the East Saginaw depot possesses a Late Victorian architectural character very different from Jackson's Italianate design. Jackson is the premier Italianate depot in Michigan. It has little competition for this distinction – the nearest competitor in size is the much smaller and more simply finished former Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad station in Kalamazoo's Haymarket Historic District, also built in the early 1870s. Only a handful of older Michigan depots are



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known to exist. The oldest is probably the original Coldwater Michigan Southern depot, reportedly built c. 1851 but moved to nearby Batavia in the 1880s, when a new depot replaced it, and only recently returned to Coldwater, to a location near the later depot. Another is the 1859 Chicago, Detroit & Canada Grand Junction Railroad station in Port Huron, now a local history museum standing almost beneath the Bluewater Bridge. Designed, it appears, by an engineer of regional importance, and unique among the early generation of railroad passenger stations in Michigan for its size and architectural distinction, the Jackson depot remains in daily service today – the oldest railroad station in the state still used for its original purpose.

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Geil, S., and S. L. Jones. *Map of Jackson County, Michigan*. Philadelphia, PA: Jos. M. Alexander, 1858.

Hart, Henry. *Map of Jackson, Jackson Co., Mich.* New York, 1853.

*Jackson Citizen-Patriot*, Jackson, MI. 1/2/1977 ("Save the rail station, is goal"), 7/26/1992 ("Jackson's station restored years ago").

*Jackson Daily Citizen*, Jackson, MI.

1. Items about the railroad: 1/17/1871, 1/26/1871, 5/6/1871, 5/26/1871, 7/7/1871, 7/28/1871, 8/26/1871, 8/31/1871, 9/25/1871, 12/15/1871, 1/7/1872, 5/4/1872, 7/24/1872, 10/28/1872, 3/8/1873
2. Items about the Union Depot: 6/18/1872, 7/8/1872, 8/7/1872, 9/30/1872, 10/16/1872, 11/17/1872, 12/7/1872, 5/15/1873, 8/25/1873, 9/1/1873, 9/2/1873, 9/5/1873, 9/6/1873, 9/9/1873, 10/23/1873, 10/29/1873, 11/4/1873

*Jackson Weekly Citizen*, Jackson, MI. 8/12/1873.

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Michigan, State of; Auditor General Plats. Record Group 67-97, vol. 26, Pl. 9121. Archives of Michigan, Dept. of History, Arts & Libraries, Lansing, MI.

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Property: Michigan Central Railroad Jackson Depot, Jackson Co., MI

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register  
criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

=====

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the  
National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the  
National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
of Action

=====

#### 5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  2  </u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>  1  </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>  1  </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>  4  </u>	<u>  0  </u> Total

Property: Michigan Central Railroad Jackson Depot, Jackson Co., MI

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   0  

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

  N/A  

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>  Transportation  </u>	Sub: <u>  Rail-related  </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>  Transportation  </u>	Sub: <u>  Rail-related  </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

  Italianate  

                    

                    

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>  Sandstone  </u>
roof	<u>  Asphalt  </u>
walls	<u>  Brick  </u>
	<u>  Sandstone  </u>
other	<u>  Iron  </u>
	<u>                    </u>

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Property: Michigan Central Railroad Jackson Depot, Jackson Co., MI

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8. Statement of Significance

=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Transportation

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1872-1952

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Significant Dates 1872-73

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Henry A. Gardner

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS) None

\_\_\_\_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

### Primary Location of Additional Data

X State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository:

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property About 3 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	714540	4680360	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
See continuation sheet.						

Property: Michigan Central Railroad Jackson Depot, Jackson Co., MI

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====

11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Description: John Guidinger, Charles Ahronheim, R. O. Christensen

Significance: R. O. Christensen

organization Jackson Historic District Commission date July 2002

State Historic Preservation Office

street & number 161 West Michigan Ave. telephone 517/335-2719

717 West Allegan St.

city or town Jackson state MI zip code 49201

Lansing MI 48909-8240

=====

Additional Documentation

=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage

or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

=====

Property Owner

=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Ms. Pam Brown, Amtrak Real Estate Department, Congress Center Building

street & number 525 West Van Buren Street telephone

city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60606

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